

Regional Transportation Authorities (RTAs) (Transit-Specific)

Defining Characteristics of Transit Regional Transit Authorities

- **Governance.** Board governance is a prominent part of public administration.
 - A Board that represents the array of interests of the member regional jurisdictions is a key to success
 - Boards differ to fit the specific characteristics of the region in terms of
 - Membership selection methods
 - Duties
 - Roles
 - Powers
- **Funding Source(s) & Taxing Authority.**
 - A dedicated funding source is a key to success be it levied by
 - Regional entities on behalf of the authority or
 - Directly by the authority
 - Mandated local contributions also can provide the transit authority financial stability
 - Advantage: Provides participating jurisdictions the flexibility to select funding from the most appropriate source(s) to their situation
 - Disadvantage: Less funding certainty than a dedicated revenue source
- **Participation Options.** In a regional organization, certain jurisdictions will undoubtedly benefit to greater and lesser degrees.
 - Participation should reflect the relative benefits to each jurisdiction
 - Participation can vary by:
 - Level of funding contribution
 - Number of positions on the board, and whether those positions are voting
 - Other variables
- **Transit Services Provided.** Provide a range of public transportation services:
 - Bus only; and
 - Combinations of bus, heavy rail (subway), light rail, commuter rail, ferry, and trolley.
- **Functions Provided.** Some serve a full range of functions while others serve a narrow range of functions:
 - Provision of funding
 - Planning and prioritizing needs
 - Construction
 - Operations and maintenance



Select Examples of Regional Transit Authorities

Governance	Local Funding Source(s)	Functions & Transit Services Provided
Serve: Urban City Center and Surrounding Localities		
Denver (CO) Regional Transportation District – Denver and eight counties		
15-member, publicly elected Board of Directors. Directors are elected to a four-year term and represent a specific district.	1% sales tax	Construct, operate and maintain Bus, light rail, commuter rail line (under construction)
Port Authority of Allegheny County (PA) – Pittsburgh and Allegheny County		
9-member Board of Directors appointed by the County Executive and approved by the County Council	County alcoholic beverage tax, rental vehicle tax, and portion of 1% County sales and use tax	Construct, operate and maintain Bus, light rail
Charlotte (NC) Area Transit System (CATS) – Mecklenburg County and municipalities		
Governed by Charlotte City Council and Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC). City Council approves contracts and agency budget and oversees procurement. MTC provides direction including decisions on service, fare policy, and long-range transit plans. MTC includes 9 voting members (mayors of the 7 municipalities in Mecklenburg County, Mecklenburg County Council Chairman, and a North Carolina DOT representative), and 6 non-voting members (representatives of the 5 surrounding counties and 1 from South Carolina DOT).	One-half cent sales tax and local operating assistance from City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, and Huntersville	Construct, operate and maintain Bus, light rail



Select Examples of Regional Transit Authorities (continued)

Governance	Local Funding Source(s)	Functions & Transit Services Provided
Serve: Urban City Center and Surrounding Localities		
Metro Transit (MN) – Minneapolis and St Paul area		
<p>An operating division of the Metropolitan Council</p> <p>Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) includes five counties and collaborates with the Metropolitan Council. Two counties (that elected not to levy taxes) are ex-officio members.</p>	<p>CTIB counties impose a one-quarter cent sales tax and a \$20 motor vehicle sales tax. The funds are allocated based on a joint powers board established principles.</p> <p>Twelve communities opted out of regional service and receive services from suburban transit providers.</p>	<p>Metro Transit serves as Operator CTIB serves as funding provider</p> <p>Bus, light rail, commuter rail</p>
Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) – Philadelphia and four counties and via regional rail Trenton and West Trenton, NJ and Newark, DE		
<p>15-member Board of Directors with two members appointed from each of the five counties and one member appointed each by the Governor of Pennsylvania, Senate Majority Leader, Senate Minority Leader, House Majority Leader, House Minority Leader</p>	<p>Each county provides an operating and capital subsidy that serves as a required local match to state and federal funds.</p>	<p>Construct, operate and maintain</p> <p>Bus, trolley, trackless trolley, subway, and regional rail (commuter rail)</p>
Utah Transit Authority (UTA) – Wasatch region covering 75 cities in 6 counties		
<p>UTA is a local district political subdivision of the State governed by a 16-member Board of Trustees with 5 members appointed by Salt Lake and Tooele Counties; 2 members appointed by Utah County; 1 member each appointed by Salt Lake County; Salt Lake City; Davis and Weber counties; the Governor; the Speaker of the House of Representatives; the State Senate; and the Utah Transportation Commission; and 1 non-voting member appointed by district member municipalities within the un-annexed counties.</p>	<p>UTA receives various sales tax revenues in the counties where it provides service, including: a local mass transit tax, an additional local mass transit tax, a supplemental state sales and use tax, and an additional county option transportation tax. The rates vary by county. Sales tax rates for transit purposes range between 0.30% in Tooele County to 0.6875% in Salt Lake County.</p>	<p>Construct, operate and maintain</p> <p>Bus, light rail, commuter rail</p>



Select Examples of Regional Transit Authorities (continued)

Governance	Local Funding Source(s)	Functions & Transit Services Provided
Serve: Multiple Localities Without a Core City		
Worcester (MA) Regional Transit Authority – City of Worcester and 34 surrounding communities		
Political subdivision of MassDOT (along with 14 other RTAs). WRTA Advisory Board includes representatives from each community in the WRTA's service area.	Member municipality assessments	WRTA is not a transit operator; however, it is responsible for planning, funding, and oversight; service provided by private operator. Bus
Advance Transit (VT & NH) – Upper Valley of New Hampshire and Vermont (two townships, four municipalities, Dartmouth College, and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center)		
Private, non-profit agency; Board of Directors includes representatives from each municipality served and local institutions (Dartmouth College, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, and Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission)	System-wide free service has been made possible by contributions from Upper Valley towns, Dartmouth College, and the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center.	Construction, operate and maintain Bus
Chittenden County (VT) Transportation Authority – Five Counties		
13-member Board of Commissioners with two Commissioners representing Burlington and one Commissioner from Essex, Hinesburg, Milton, Shelburne, South Burlington, Winooski, Williston, Washington County, Franklin County, Lamoille County and Grand Isle County	Member community assessments. Charges based on 1) number of driver pay hours required; 2) fully allocated operating costs for upcoming year; and 3) any foregone fares for no- or reduced-fare service. Special one-time or multi-year assessments may also be required for communities seeking new membership or for capital equipment for new routes/segments. Member communities pay assessments from property tax revenues.	Construction, operate and maintain Bus